

Veterans Services

Fred Murphy, Veterans Service Officer

MISSION STATEMENT

The Veterans Services Office works in association with other government agencies to advocate for veteran's rights and to identify, apply for and retain benefits and services for veterans and their families.

VETERANS SERVICES FUND 100 / APPROPRIATION 53650

	Actual 2002-03	Budget 2003-04	Requested 2004-05	Recommended 2004-05	Change %	Adopted 2004-05
Expenditures						
Salaries and Employee Benefits	\$ 192,974	\$ 206,323	\$ 225,654	\$ 225,654	9%	\$ -
Services and Supplies	24,194	29,088	29,108	28,023	-4%	-
Intra Fund Charges	-	584	584	-	-100%	-
Net Budget:	\$ 217,168	\$ 235,995	\$ 255,346	\$ 253,677	7%	\$ -
Revenue						
Intergovernmental Revenue	\$ 29,440	\$ 29,500	\$ 29,500	\$ 29,500	0%	\$ -
Other Financing Sources	-	13,000	7,000	5,000	-62%	-
Total Revenue:	29,440	42,500	36,500	34,500	-19%	-
Net County Cost:	\$ 187,728	\$ 193,495	\$ 218,846	\$ 219,177	13%	\$ -
Allocated Positions	3	3	3	3	0%	-

CORE FUNCTION

Veterans Services

Veterans Services assists clients in obtaining benefits from state and federal government agencies including, but not limited to, the Department of Veterans Affairs for claims related to compensation and pensions, survivor benefits, education, vocational rehabilitation, home loans, life insurance, and burial benefits. One of the main functions of the office is to deliver the State of California's College Fee Waiver Program to the children of disabled veterans. The office also assists veterans in obtaining medical treatment from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

FY 2003 -04 Major Accomplishments

- Department head is president for the California Association of County Veterans Service Officers.
- Implemented a computer system that helps identify future claims as well as track present claims.
- Provided a vital, timely and efficient system of services and advocacy to veterans, and for their dependents and survivors.
- Intervened on behalf of the veterans in solving difficulties with receiving benefits from the health care service delivery system for veterans.

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FY 2004-05 Planned Accomplishments

- Establish an outreach program to bring our services to the homeless community.
- Continue involvement with the California Association of County Veterans Service Officers to protect and increase state funding for the department.
- Continue outreach efforts to veterans and their families with a primary focus on veterans in the senior community.
- In cooperation with the Health and Human Services Department, continue to develop a plan to redirect various medical services to veterans from Medi-Cal and Indigent Services funding.

Department Comments

Due to changes in the medical-fee structure, the department effectively managed an increase in the number of veterans seeking assistance from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Staff expects the demand for claims in the next fiscal year to remain flat, with the requests for services to increase. The demand for monetary claims for veterans or their families confined to skilled nursing facilities is expected to increase in the next year, and this trend will continue into the future as the baby boomers continue to age.

County Executive Comments And Recommendations

The net budget for *Veterans Services* includes revenue that will be received from a Veterans Vehicle License Fee Trust Fund (\$5,000) to offset increases in operational costs. The County Executive Office recommends an increase of \$25,682 in the net county cost in order to maintain FY 2003-04 staffing levels. The department reports there have been increased activities and demand for services related to military personnel returning to the United States after being involved in overseas deployments, as well as contacts with older veterans affected by current war-related issues.

CORE FUNCTION: VETERANS SERVICES

Compensation & Pension Claims Program

Program Purpose: To assess eligibility for compensation for service-connected disabilities and pension funding for disabled veterans, prepare applications, and act as the advocate for veterans and their families to maximize their benefit potential.

Total Expenditures: \$178,742

Total Staffing: 2.10

- **Key Intended Outcome:** Veterans and their families achieve maximum benefits.

Compensation & Pension Claims Indicators:	Actual 2002-03	Projected 2003-04	Target 2004-05
# of claims filed	384	351	335
# of awards received	228	170	200
\$ of awards received	\$1,193,452	\$853,644	\$1,300,000

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Program Comments: The decline in compensation and pension awards is the result of two factors. There are fewer people leaving the military, thus there are fewer new claimants. The second factor is the huge backlog of unfinished claims. The regional office that processes our claims presently has over 14,000 open claims. Historically the number is around 5,000.

College Fee Waiver Program

Program Purpose: To assess eligibility for and approve applications submitted by children of disabled veterans for waivers in tuition and system wide fees for University of California, California State University and community colleges to assist them in achieving higher education.

Total Expenditures: \$25,535

Total Staffing: 0.30

- **Key Intended Outcome:** Children of disabled veterans receive higher education.

College Fee Waiver Indicators:	Actual 2002-03	Projected 2003-04	Target 2004-05
# of waivers granted	152	230	230
\$ of waivers granted	\$284,696	\$524,666	\$525,000

Program Comments: Working with the County Office of Education to promote the College Fee Waiver Program has been more of a success than we initially anticipated.

Health Care Enrollment Program

Program Purpose: To enroll veterans for health care through the Department of Veterans Assistance, and to advocate on behalf of the veteran for ongoing medical care to maximize potential benefits and services.

Total Expenditures: \$51,069

Total Staffing: 0.60

- **Key Intended Outcome:** Veterans achieve maximum health care benefits.

Health Care Enrollment Indicators:	Actual 2002-03	Projected 2003-04	Target 2004-05
# of claims filed	129	106	110

Program Comments: FY 2003-04 is the first full year of restricted access to the Veterans Assistance Health Care System. The result is that fewer veterans are now eligible for enrollment.